

Lake County Sheriff's Office

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**John D. Idleburg
Sheriff**

MEDIA RELEASE

Darien Man Charged with Grooming After Engaging 'Young Girl'

On June 30, 2022, the Lake County Sheriff's Office Special Investigations Group in collaboration with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) concluded an investigation which resulted in the arrest of a man for the offense of grooming.

During the month of June, undercover detectives, posing as a girl under the age of 15, communicated with James R. Wood, 35, of the 7500 block of Farmingdale Drive, Darien. The conversations began after Wood engaged the 'girl' on social media.

After learning of the 'girl's' age, Wood requested nude photos of her. Wood also exposed himself to the 'girl' while utilizing the application. He then proceeded to have graphic conversations with the 'girl' and informed her that he was going to travel to Lake County to engage her in a sexual encounter.

On June 30, 2022, sheriff's detectives obtained an arrest warrant for Wood for three counts of grooming (class 4 felonies). He was arrested at his place of employment in Naperville by sheriff's detectives without incident, later the same day.

Further investigation revealed Wood was planning to travel to meet the 'girl,' to engage in a sexual relationship, but could not find the time after starting a new job. Sheriff's detectives also found Wood recently worked as a camp counselor and substitute teacher in the Darien area.

If you or your child have any information about Wood, please contact your local police department.

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "We cannot stress this enough – please do not let your children communicate on social media applications with anyone, unless you as their parent or guardian have personally verified it is someone they know. Predators use every day social media applications to prey on children of all ages from all communities."

Following an initial court hearing, Wood remains held in the Lake County Jail on \$100,000.00 bail. He is next due in court on July 26, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. in courtroom T020.

All defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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